

2

Risorgimento and Revolution 1815–49

POINTS TO CONSIDER

This chapter covers a long and important period. It begins by examining:

- The state of politics in 1815, including
- The secret societies that existed

It then focuses on the key events of the period, in particular:

- The revolutions of 1820–1
- The revolutions of 1831–2
- The revolutions of 1848–9, including the Roman Republic

You should aim to understand what the revolutions were about and why, by 1849, so little had actually been achieved. Also, you must be familiar with the major nationalist figures of this period, including:

- Giuseppe Mazzini, a key figure in the *Risorgimento*
- Other possible nationalist leaders, including Pope Pius IX

Key dates

1820–1		Revolutions
1830	June	Fighting in the streets of Paris led Charles X to abdicate
1831		Mazzini founded 'Young Italy'
1846		Pius IX elected as Pope
1848–9		Revolutions
1848	March 13	The fall of Metternich
	July 24	Charles Albert defeated by Austria at the battle of Custoza
1849	February	Founding of the Roman Republic
	June	Ending of the Roman Republic
1849	March 23	Charles Albert defeated at the battle of Novara

1 | Italian Politics in 1815

There were a number of political groups in Italy in 1815, each having different hopes and aims.

Liberals

Liberals believed that the people had the right to some say in government and that this was best done through a representative assembly or parliament elected by property owners. Liberals were also concerned with establishing a rule of law which guaranteed certain rights, such as a fair trial, and certain freedoms, such as free speech for all citizens. They were generally non-violent, mainly middle class, and were against both an **absolute monarchy** and a **republican democracy**. They favoured instead a **constitutional monarchy**.

Radicals

Radicals were much more extreme in their views. They wanted social reforms and a fairer distribution of wealth and were often prepared to use violence as a way to obtain their goals. Many of them were members of revolutionary secret societies and believed that political power should lie with the people, not with a parliament unless it were elected by all men and not just by property owners. There was at this time little thought of giving a vote to peasants or to women, since both of these groups were believed to be incapable of taking an intelligent interest in politics. Radicals had many disagreements with the liberals, but at least both groups were opposed to the Restored Monarchies.

Nationalists

Nationalists believed that people of the same race, language, culture and tradition should be united in an independent nation of their own. It should have clear geographical boundaries and not be subject to control by any other nation. Many nationalists went further and wanted a republic instead of a monarchy. Liberals and radicals both supported nationalism and unification as the way forward for Italy, even though they did not agree on whether the means to achieve this aim should be peaceful or violent. There was also widespread disagreement about whether the whole of the Italian peninsula, or merely part of it, should be unified.

Metternich's view

Metternich (see page 9) adopted an entirely negative stance, being totally opposed to nationalism, liberalism and radicalism. He had no intention of allowing such dangerous ideas to spread, as they would undermine not just Austrian control over Italy but perhaps the whole state of Austria, which was not a nation state but the family property of the Habsburg family, containing many different cultural and ethnic groups. Hence he saw the need to maintain the Italian jigsaw of separate states ruled by absolute monarchs: 'Italy' as a united nation should continue not to exist.

Key question

What political groups existed in Italy after the defeat of Napoleon, and what did each believe?

Absolute monarchy

A political system under which a monarch rules without a constitution that limits his powers and without a parliament whose agreement is needed for the making of laws.

Republican democracy

A system under which an elected government controls the affairs of a state, and in which there is no monarch, even as a figurehead.

Constitutional monarchy

A system under which a king is bound by certain agreed restrictions on his power set out in a written document (the constitution).

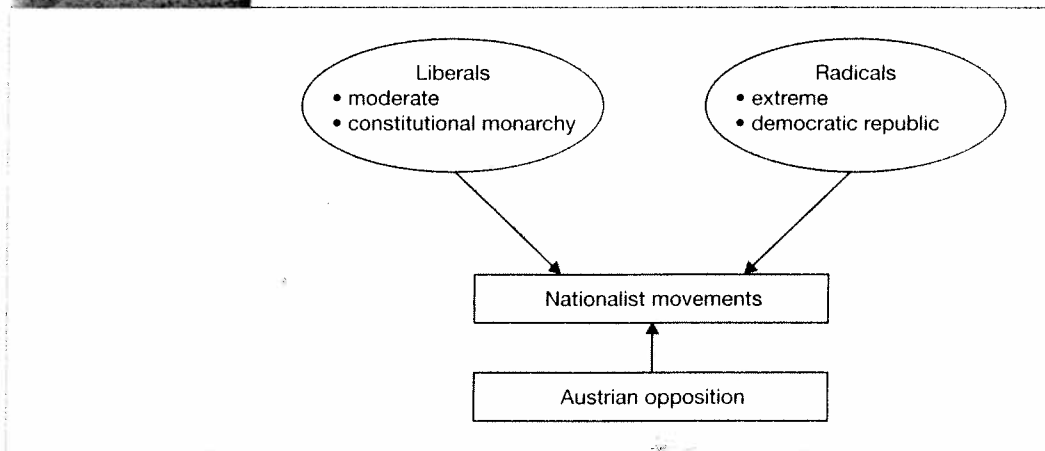
Key question

Why did the Austrian Chancellor oppose nationalism in Italy?

In 1815 there were no 'Italians', he insisted, only Neapolitans, Piedmontese, Tuscans and the rest, and that was how it should stay. Hence Italy would be weak, divided and easily controlled by Austria.

Metternich was not alone in these beliefs. Many intelligent, well-educated men saw nothing but difficulties in the way of unity between the Italian states, believing that local loyalties were still more important to the people of the peninsula than dreams of national unity. Hence the Piedmontese ambassador to Russia wrote about the possible take-over of Genoa by Piedmont in 1818 that perhaps the Piedmontese and the Genoans could not mix, 'separated as they are by ancient and ingrained hatred'.

Summary diagram: Italian politics in 1815



Key question

What did the secret societies hope to achieve, and why did they have only limited success?

Freemasonry

A secret fraternity providing fellowship and mutual assistance.

2 | Secret Societies

In 1820, when revolutions broke out first in Sicily and then in Naples and Piedmont, secret societies played an important part. These societies are thought to have developed from eighteenth-century **freemasonry** where men formed themselves into groups pledged to mutual protection with secret passwords and semi-religious rituals. The Church viewed these groups with grave suspicion as anti-Catholic and as a danger to the established social order. In the 1790s similar groups whose main purpose was to drive out the French had sprung up all over Italy. After 1815 their aims changed to overthrowing the Restored Monarchs and to driving out the Austrians.

Membership

The societies attracted a wide variety of members: army officers, students, lawyers, teachers and doctors, all well educated and

mostly middle class. A few noblemen also joined but peasants and workers were almost unknown. The majority of members were patriotic, enthusiastic and daring. Many were idealists, some were dreamers, a few were rogues and criminals; some wanted to be leaders and were happy to risk their lives in wild adventures and impossible missions.

The great weakness of the societies was their unwillingness to act together and their lack of an overall organisation. Most societies were small and scattered. Sometimes they did work together, but much more often they operated on their own and, because of their emphasis on secrecy, historians are still not sure how many members they had or how successful they were.

The Carbonari

Far and away the best known and most important of the societies was the *Carbonari*. They were particularly active in southern Italy, especially in Naples, where they are thought to have had about 60,000 members. This was about five per cent of the adult male population, and the government of Naples became worried enough to order the suppression of the society. Their efforts failed and membership of the *Carbonari* went on rising. It is known that they had elaborate rituals and swore unquestioning obedience to their leaders.

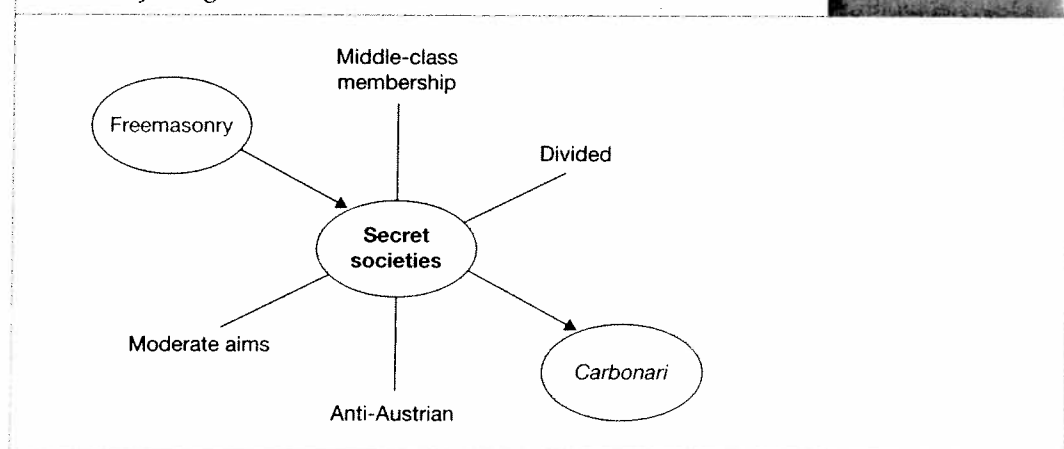
Unlike many of the other societies, this one was not particularly anti-Catholic, and although some of its members planned armed revolution and the overthrow of the existing social order, they were not committed republicans. Often their aims in fact were surprisingly mild ones. In Piedmont they hoped to establish a constitutional monarchy, with a king having only limited power. Similarly in Naples, they did not want to replace the king with a republic, but just to persuade him to grant a constitution.

Carbonari

Means 'charcoal burners' in Italian (the singular being *Carbonaro*), and it has been suggested that the earliest members were men who sold charcoal for domestic fuel. Soon, however, middle-class members predominated.

Key term

Summary diagram: Secret societies



Key question
Why did the
revolutions take
place?

3 | The Revolutions of 1820–1

Naples

The 1820 revolutions began in Naples where, in 1818, King Ferdinand had greatly increased the Church's power to censor books, newspapers and magazines. This angered the middle class, lawyers and teachers in particular, because freedom of speech was being made impossible. As Ferdinand was short of money he cut back on public spending, halted works such as road and harbour improvements and reduced still further what little education was available to the people. Poverty, corrupt government and restrictions on personal freedom became general.

In January 1820 news of a revolution in Spain encouraged the *Carbonari* and the liberals in Naples to take action. Led by a priest and supported by 100 junior officers and soldiers from the cavalry, 30 *Carbonari* members advanced on the town of Avellino and a widespread uprising soon took place. The attempt by the government troops to round up the rebels was very half-hearted, particularly after one of the commanding officers, General Guglielmo Pepe, led one infantry and two cavalry regiments to join the rebel army with himself at the head of what had now become a revolution.

In July, King Ferdinand promised to meet the rebels' demands for a constitution like that granted in Spain in 1812. This had given the vote to all adult males, limited the king's power, and abolished many noble and clerical privileges. King Ferdinand swore to abide by such an arrangement faithfully: 'Omnipotent God – if I lie, do thou at this moment annihilate me.' For a time it looked as if the revolution had been a success, especially when the revolutionaries led by General Pepe marched into the city of Naples and were received by the king. A new government was appointed, Pepe was put in charge of the army and the *Carbonari* gained large numbers of recruits.

Sicily

While all this was going on another and separate revolt had begun in Sicily, the other half of Ferdinand's kingdom, where the people were determined to fight for independence from Naples. Sicily had been forcibly united with Naples in 1815, and Sicilians felt that Ferdinand's government was concentrating on Naples and neglecting their island's needs.

Agricultural prices had fallen sharply, with disastrous consequences for the Sicilian peasants, who found themselves getting more and more into debt. As a result, riots took place in Palermo, the island's capital. There were demands for a constitution, government offices were burned down, prisoners were released and the Neapolitan governor was sent home by boat as the revolutionaries took over the city.

Failure in Naples and Sicily

In Naples the first meeting of the newly elected parliament took place in October 1820. Its members were middle-class professional men, lawyers, bankers and merchants, along with a few noblemen, some priests, but, of course, no peasants or women. Members discussed what had happened in Sicily and agreed that at all costs the island must remain part of the Kingdom of Naples. The island must not be allowed to declare independence and must be brought to heel, by Neapolitan armed force if necessary. Here was a dangerous division of revolutionary forces.

The Austrian Chancellor, Metternich, was greatly disturbed that the Neapolitan revolution had apparently been so successful. He did not approve of revolutions – they were unsettling events that disturbed the peace, not only of the state in which they happened, but also in neighbouring states. Therefore, he argued, it was only right for the Great Powers (Austria, Prussia and Russia) to meet and if necessary take action to suppress such disturbances wherever they occurred.

In 1821 the King of Naples was invited to attend one such meeting, at Laibach. There Ferdinand declared that he had been forced to grant the constitution out of fear and asked for Austria to help him to restore his absolute rule. Metternich did not have to be asked twice. He was delighted to intervene. In March 1821, therefore, the Austrian army entered the city of Naples, despite brave resistance led by General Pepe. Severe reprisals were meted out to the citizens indiscriminately by the Austrian authorities. Arrests, imprisonments and executions became so common that even Metternich was shocked by the savagery and ordered the dismissal of the chief of police.

In Sicily too, the old order was soon in control again. Naples recovered control over Sicily and made a future attempt at breaking away less likely by abolishing the **trade guilds** whose members had been leaders of the revolution there.

Piedmont

Piedmont was the other state that saw revolution erupt in 1820. The king, Victor Emmanuel I, had pursued a very reactionary policy since his return. He declared that the old constitution of 1770 would remain in force and could never be changed. Piedmont would therefore remain an absolute monarchy in spite of continued pressure by a small group of liberals.

When news of what was happening in Naples reached Piedmont discontent came out into the open. The *Carbonari* rapidly gained new members, and university students, army officers and liberals combined to establish a revolutionary government in the town of Alessandria, where they proclaimed their independence as the 'Kingdom of Italy' and declared war on Austria. An army mutiny in Turin, the state capital, encouraged Victor Emmanuel I to see his situation as hopeless and to abdicate.

Key question
Why did the
revolutions fail?

Trade guilds
Associations of
craftsmen; early
forms of trade
unions.

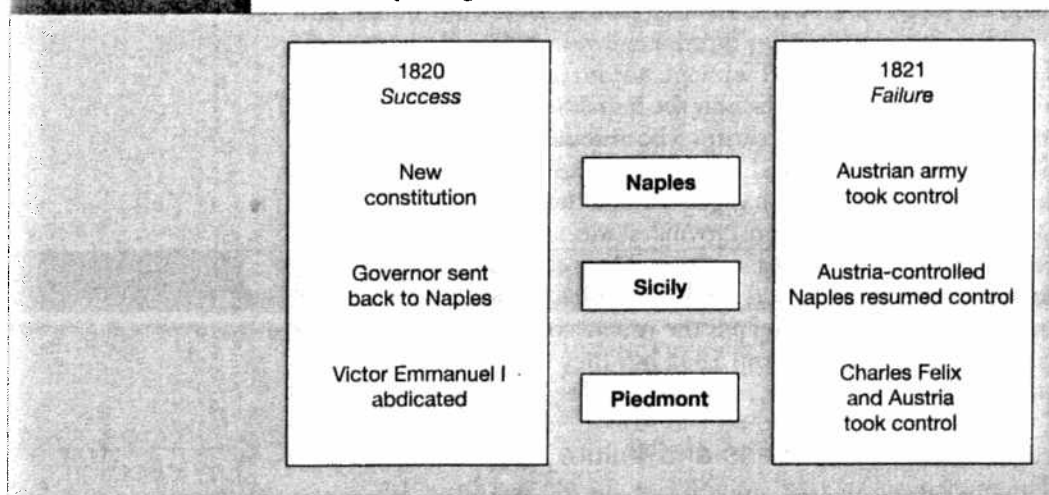
Key term

Key question
Why did revolution
break out, but fail in
Piedmont?

The liberals now turned for leadership to the young Charles Albert, second in line to the throne. He issued a vague proclamation praising the Spanish Constitution of 1812 as a model to be followed, and promptly appointed a new government. The main problem was that he was not the legitimate ruler. Victor Emmanuel's brother, Charles Felix, was first in line to the throne in Piedmont. He was temporarily absent from Piedmont but he soon issued a statement denouncing Charles Albert as a rebel. Charles Felix also refused to accept any change in the form of government. Charles Albert then took fright and fled from Turin, leaving the liberals to fight to defend the constitution as best they could.

At this stage Charles Felix appealed to Metternich for aid. This help came, and Austrian troops, together with troops loyal to Charles Felix, defeated the forces of the Turin liberals at the battle of Novara in 1821. Hundreds of revolutionaries went into exile. The 1820–1 revolutions were over and until 1823 Piedmont was occupied by an Austrian army.

Summary diagram: The revolutions of 1820–1



Key question
How far were the revolutions in the early-1830s simply a re-run of those a decade earlier?

Key date
Fighting in the streets of Paris led Charles X to abdicate: July 1830

4 | The Revolutions of 1831–2

In 1830 a revolution in Paris led Charles X to abdicate. The new king, Louis-Philippe, was a more liberal figure than his predecessor; indeed he was known as the 'citizen king'. Hence Italian liberals became excited by the possibility that the new French government would support revolutions in Italy. Disturbances broke out again, this time in Modena, Parma and the Papal States. In most of these places the aim was a moderate one – to persuade the local ruler to grant a constitution.

Modena and Parma

In Modena the revolt was led by Enrico Misley, the student son of a university professor. He trusted his own ruler, Duke Francis IV

of Modena, to whom he revealed his plans for a united Italy, but his trust was betrayed. He was arrested in February 1831, two days before the uprising was due to begin.

Misley's arrest encouraged Duke Francis to believe that the danger was over and he went to Vienna to negotiate for Austrian help, should it be needed on some future occasion. Yet while he was away revolutionaries took over the city of Modena and set up a provisional government. This encouraged students in neighbouring Parma to organise riots and to demand a constitution from their ruler, the Duchess Marie-Louise. She fled in terror and a provisional government was established by the students. Contact with revolutionaries in Modena was at once made and a joint army commander appointed.

Yet the revolutionaries had little time to organise, for within a month Duke Francis had returned to Modena at the head of an Austrian army and quickly defeated the revolutionaries. Savage reprisals were taken and anyone suspected of supporting the rebels was imprisoned, exiled or executed. Even the wearing of a moustache or beard, supposedly signs of radicalism, could lead one to be arrested as a revolutionary. Parma was also occupied by Austrian forces, and Marie-Louise returned.

The Papal States

Similar uprisings took place in the Papal States, organised this time by the professional classes who resented the oppressive rule of the Church authorities. The papal government put up little resistance and a provisional government known as 'The Government of the Italian Provinces' was formed in Bologna in February 1831. It did not last long. Once more the power of the Austrian army proved decisive: Metternich's troops moved into the Papal States and defeated the rebels. Minor uprisings continued during 1831 and 1832 but they were fiercely suppressed by the violent and undisciplined Austrian troops.

Revolutionary success and failure 1820–32

The revolutions of 1820 and 1831 achieved very little. In Piedmont, Naples and the Papal States reactionary governments strengthened their hold with the help of Austria and by using military force.

Where revolutions were successful in ousting their rulers the success was only temporary and due more to the failure of the governments to take effective action, to the rulers' habit of running away and to their lack of military resources than to the strength of the revolutionaries. Remembering what happened in the **French Revolution** at the end of the eighteenth century, many rulers expected to be defeated. This gave the revolutionaries an early advantage, but one that they quickly lost through their failure to take united action.

The revolutions were weakened by being local affairs, concerned only with limited areas. There was little communication between the revolutionaries in the different states and even less co-operation. The revolutionary government in

← **Key question**
Why did the
revolutions fail in
1820–1 and 1831–2?

French Revolution
In the 'great
revolution',
beginning in 1789,
the existing order
was overthrown and
a republic set up.
Louis XVI being
executed in 1793.

Key term

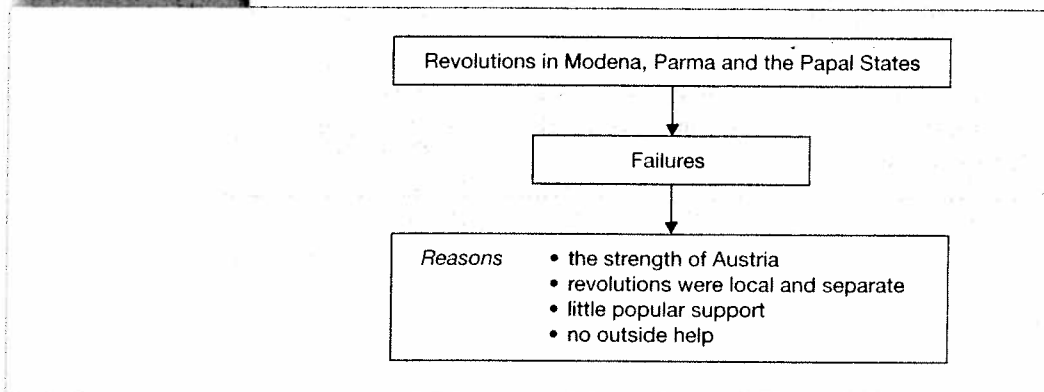
Bologna refused to send help to Modena, for instance. Elsewhere revolutions were not co-ordinated. They relied heavily on a network of small groups of revolutionaries set up by the *Carbonari* and other secret societies, but these were isolated units and their aims differed from place to place. Most revolutionaries were surprisingly moderate in their demands and not given to violence: usually all they were trying to achieve was the granting of a constitution to allow the people some part in government.

The revolutionary movements were mainly middle class, except in Sicily where peasants were involved. Elsewhere popular interest and support were not encouraged by the revolutionary leaders, who feared that allowing the mass of poorly educated people to join in the revolutions would lead eventually to rule by the mob. Not surprisingly, therefore, ordinary people often welcomed back their former rulers with open arms because middle-class revolutionaries did not want their involvement in politics.

In short, the revolutions had failed because the revolutionaries were divided among themselves and lacked mass support, and because they lacked outside help. It was hoped in 1831 that the French might provide military support, but when this was not forthcoming the Austrian army had an easy time of it.

By 1831 Italy still merely a geographical expression. Unification was not even on the agenda. But what of the future? Would the unsuccessful revolutions on the 1820s and 1830s, and the martyrs that had been created, inspire greater efforts? Could revolutionaries achieve greater unity and greater support? Would the international situation become more favourable?

Summary diagram: The revolutions of 1831–2



Key question
How important a figure was Mazzini in the movement for Italian unification?

5 | Giuseppe Mazzini

Despite the failure of the revolutions of the early 1830s, it was in this decade that the *Risorgimento* (see page 14) began to make some progress. This was due above all to the work of a dedicated revolutionary intellectual, Giuseppe Mazzini, dubbed by Metternich 'the most dangerous man in Europe'.

Profile: Giuseppe Mazzini 1805–72

- 1805 – Born in Genoa, intelligent, sensitive and physically frail
- 1821 – Became a nationalist after seeing Piedmontese refugee revolutionaries begging in the streets
- 1822–7 – Studied medicine and then law
- 1827 – Joined the *Carbonari*, but was betrayed in 1830. While imprisoned, he decided he must work for the independence and unification of Italy. He now became a full-time and totally committed revolutionary. He wore black as a sign of mourning for his divided and oppressed country
- 1831 – Moved to the south of France where he founded 'Young Italy', Italy's first real political party
- 1837 – Went into exile in London
- 1849 – Returned to Italy as head of the Roman Republic until Rome fell to the French in June 1849. Again exiled to London where he lived in poverty, writing tens of thousands of letters and hundreds of books and articles
- 1872 – After many years in exile he returned secretly to Italy. Died in Pisa and buried in Genoa, his birthplace



Mazzini was a highly controversial figure. His radical approach led his political enemies to criticise him as an enemy of Italy and a terrorist, and at the same time as an impractical dreamer. Yet his supporters described him as 'greatest, bravest, most heroic of Italians' and as a profound thinker. Historians' verdicts too have differed widely, partly because his thinking was complex and evolved over a long period and partly because, as an exile often under sentence of death, he often destroyed his letters. (Those that survived were written in handwriting so tiny that it served as a secret code.) What is certain, however, is that he is a key figure in the history of Italian unification.

Mazzini's ideas

It is not easy to get to grips with Mazzini's thought, and few thinkers have been so misunderstood and caricatured. Nevertheless Denis Mack Smith, in his superb biography (1994), has provided a convincing analysis of his ideas:

- Mazzini insisted that he had 'one overriding aim' and that was 'the brotherhood of people'. He believed in the equality of human beings and of races. He had contempt for **xenophobia** and imperialism.
- Yet he believed that the next stage of the world's history would be domination by nations. The political map had to be redrawn so that distinct peoples occupied their own nation-states. This

← **Key question**
How realistic were
Mazzini's ideas?

Xenophobia
Hatred of
foreigners.

Key term

Key figure

Karl Marx 1818–73

The socialist philosopher and activist who argued that national identities were superficial: the fundamental division among human beings was their class allegiance.

Key terms

Federal

Possessing states that are self-governing in their internal affairs.

Ambivalence

Contradictory ideas or feelings.

stress on nationalism led **Karl Marx** to dismiss Mazzini as 'that everlasting old ass', but Marx fatally underestimated the importance of national allegiances.

- So, Italy had to be united.
- He did not want a **federal** Italy, which might retain the old foreign rulers. Instead, the whole peninsula should be independent, with one central government and locally elected authorities.
- There should be democracy and the guarantee of individual rights.
- Italy should be unified by its own efforts. He wanted to avoid help from France, as that might merely replace one form of outside domination by another.
- The ideal was that there should be unification 'from below'. The people should rise up against their oppressors. But if monarchs were prepared to fight against Austrian domination, they should be supported. He was not absolutely committed to republicanism: that was merely his ideal.
- Socially, he wanted greater equality, with an end to poverty and with taxation being proportional to wealth. There should be free and compulsory education for all and women's rights should be guaranteed.

Mazzini's ideas constitute a remarkably 'modern' agenda, and a remarkably radical one in the nineteenth century. No wonder moderate liberals in the 1840s looked upon him as dangerous. How could they attract the support of France, while he called for all foreign nations to stand aside from Italian affairs? How could they generate support from wealthy figures, while he wished to see a redistribution of wealth? How could they appeal to individual Italian rulers, while his ideal was republicanism? Mazzini might on occasions appeal for the support of particular rulers, but the **ambivalence** of his thought on this issue must surely have made them wary.

Key question

Were Mazzini's ideas practical, or were they too idealistic and visionary?

Conclusion

Italy was unified, as Mazzini said it would be, and nationalism did indeed prove a potent force in nineteenth- and twentieth-century history. Furthermore, Mazzini's ideas inspired many disciples. Yet history did not follow the exact pattern he hoped. As we shall see, Italy came to be unified more 'from above' than 'from below', much to his disgust. He was to describe the new Italian unified state as a 'dead corpse'.

Some may judge that an Italy unified on Mazzinian lines would have been a more liberal, progressive and altogether preferable state to the one that did emerge. Others will think that such a state is pure fantasy.

Key question

How effective a political activist was Mazzini?

'Young Italy'

Mazzini was not merely a thinker, he aspired also to be a doer. When Charles Albert finally became King of Piedmont in 1831, Mazzini wrote to him about the coming revolution and invited him to become its leader. 'Put yourself at the head of the nation;

write on your banner “Union, Liberty, Independence” ... Give your name to a century’. He added privately, ‘Not that I have any hopes of him’, and he was right. No reply came from Charles Albert. Shortly afterwards Mazzini tried other tactics.

Later in 1831, dissatisfied with the limited progress brought about by the secret societies, he founded an organisation with much clearer objectives. ‘Young Italy’ has been called Italy’s first real political party.

He described the new party in these words:

‘Young Italy’ is a brotherhood of Italians who believe in a law of progress and duty and are convinced that Italy is destined to become one nation. They join with the intention of remaking Italy as one independent nation of freemen and equals.

Those who joined had to swear to work to make Italy ‘one free independent republican nation’. Members would campaign peacefully and attempt to convince others of their views, but Mazzini also accepted that on occasions violent tactics might be necessary.

Soon Mazzini and ‘Young Italy’ were involved in various attempts to further the cause of unification:

- in a plan for an uprising in Naples in 1832, on the assumption that the peasants were ‘a volcano about to erupt’
- in organising a mutiny in the Piedmontese army
- in a rising in Savoy
- in an attempted **coup** in Piedmont, for which, in his absence, he was condemned to death.

None of these, however, came anywhere near to success. Their main effect was probably to allow Mazzini’s political enemies to spread scare stories. Metternich, for instance, insisted – quite inaccurately – that he was trying to assassinate Charles Albert.

Mazzini’s significance

Mazzini gave tremendous impetus to Italian nationalism. No one else campaigned for long or so tirelessly in the cause of a united Italy. He spent most of his time organising a propaganda campaign to convince Italians to support the creation of a democratic, self-governing state of Italy. It is thus as an inspirational prophet that Mazzini’s true significance lies. But he has two other claims to fame:

- He ‘converted’ many to the cause. Easily the most important of his recruits was Giuseppe Garibaldi, who involved himself in a proposed Mazzinian revolt in Genoa in 1831. The scheme failed but Garibaldi escaped before his trial and was sentenced to death in his absence. He recalled of Mazzini that ‘he alone was awake when all around were slumbering’.
- Mazzini, whom many considered an impractical dreamer, became, in effect, President of Rome in 1849, and in this

Mazzini founded
‘Young Italy’: 1831

Key date

Coup
A sudden and violent seizure of power.

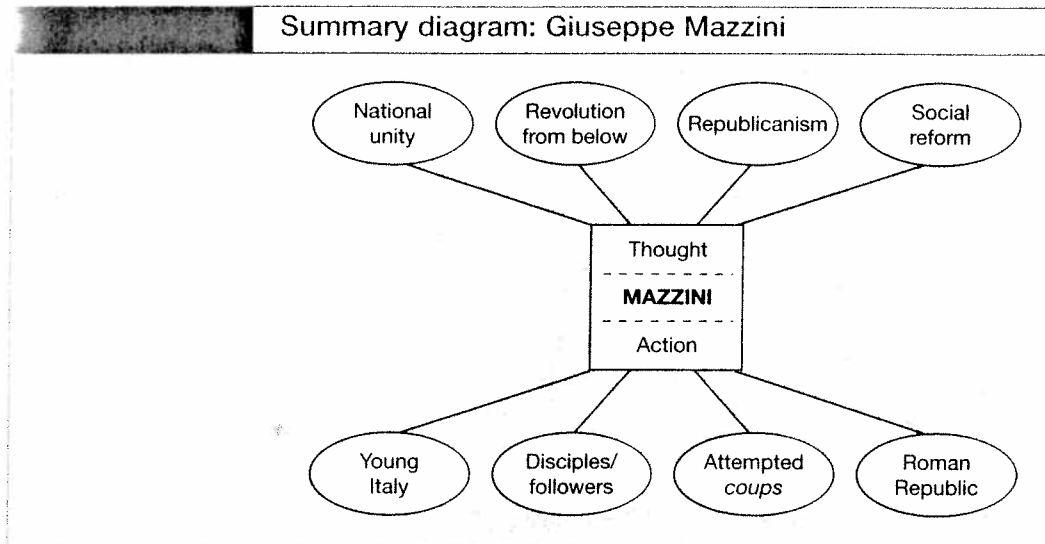
Key term

← **Key question**
What did Mazzini achieve?

position he showed highly constrictive abilities (see page 37).

Mazzini's major weakness was that his ideas were too intellectual for most people to grasp, and they were certainly too radical for most cautious, middle-class reformers. He was also absent from Italy for such long periods – totalling in all over 40 years – that he became out of touch with the situation, exaggerating the development of national identity among the bulk of Italians. It is untrue that he failed to appreciate the revolutionary potential of the peasants, but it must be admitted that he knew relatively little about them and had even less contact with them.

Summary diagram: Giuseppe Mazzini



Key question
What strategies, other than the Mazzinian, existed in Italy at this time?

6 | Alternative Strategies and Leaders

Mazzini was not the only revolutionary leader, and ideas very different from his were circulating among the educated élite. Two strategies focused on Piedmont and on the Pope.

Key question
Why did some believe that Piedmont should lead Italy?

Piedmont

In Piedmont moderate nationalists, taking their lead from **Cesare Balbo**, proposed that their state should lead the other Italian states in an attempt to drive out the Austrians. They argued that only Piedmont was strong enough to reclaim Lombardy and Venetia from the Austrians and rally the other Italian states into some sort of union. Proposals were put forward that Charles Albert should be the future king of a united Italy, although some believed that this new state should cover only the northern half, rather than the whole, of the peninsula.

As we shall see, in the next chapter, this strategy achieved a good deal of success, though under Charles Albert's successor as King of Piedmont.

Key figure
Cesare Balbo
1789–1853
Wrote widely on Italian history and politics. His 1844 publication, *On the Hopes of Italy*, argued that Piedmont should spearhead Italian unity.

Pope Pius IX

Another possible leader was suggested by the Piedmontese writer **Vincenzo Gioberti**. In 1843 he suggested that, as the Pope and the Catholic Church were the glories of Italy, the Italian states should form themselves into a federation with the Pope as its president. His book, *On the Moral and Civil Primacy of the Italians*, sold 5000 copies, but the bad reputation of the Papal States as oppressive and corrupt seemed too great a stumbling block for his ideas to be put into operation. However, the situation changed in 1846 with the election of a new Pope, Pius IX, who was believed to have liberal sympathies. Many were astounded that such a figure had been elected. 'We were prepared for anything', said Metternich, 'except a liberal Pope'.

Pius IX was a man of personal piety and deep faith, but emotional, excitable and with a quick temper. He was seen by many who knew him as impressionable, impulsive and unpredictable. Pius said of himself, in a letter to a previous Pope,

Key question

Why did this Pope turn out to be such an unsuitable Italian leader?

Pius IX elected as Pope: 1846

Key date

Vincenzo Gioberti 1801–52

A Piedmontese writer and politician, was briefly prime minister of Piedmont in 1848–9 but soon retired from politics, disillusioned with Pius IX.

Key figure



In this hostile cartoon from 1852 Pius is depicted as removing the mask of piety to reveal the more sinister and more scheming reality beneath.



Profile: Pope Pius IX 1792–1878

- 1792 – Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti was born in Ancona, ninth child of a noble family with strong Church connections
- 1807 – Developed epilepsy; entered the Church
- 1819 – Became a priest, progressing to cardinal in 1845
- 1846 – Surprise choice as Pope on the death of Gregory XVI. Took name of Pius IX (known in Italy as Pope *Pio Nono*). Appeared to be liberal
- 1848 April – Complete change of policy. Suddenly condemned Italian nationalists, rejected the *Risorgimento* and refused to allow papal troops to help drive out the Austrians. Had to escape in disguise from Rome as revolution began
- 1849 – **Excommunicated** all who tried to reduce temporal power of Papacy, and denounced Roman Republic
- 1850 – Returned to Rome. Abolished all early reforms
- 1861 – Catholics forbidden to have any connection with the new Kingdom of Italy
- 1864 – *Syllabus of Errors* published, rejecting liberalism, nationalism and other 'pernicious errors'
- 1870 – First Vatican Council held. Attempt to increase Pope's spiritual power, now that he had lost most of the temporal power. Papal decisions declared infallible. Freedom of religion opposed: Catholic doctrine was the only true belief
- 1878 – Died within a month of Victor Emmanuel II, his long-standing enemy

Key term

Excommunicated
Excluded from the services and sacraments of the Catholic Church. Those who died excommunicated could not be buried by a priest or in consecrated ground, and so, it was commonly believed, would go to hell.

Pius's reputation for liberalism seemed fully justified in 1846–7. He freed 2000 political prisoners, mostly revolutionaries; he reformed education, the law and papal administration; and he gave laymen a greater share in public affairs. He also ended press censorship, allowed Jews out of the ghetto, granted Rome a constitution to replace absolute papal rule, and created the *Consulta*, an elected body to advise the Pope. Here, it seemed, was the figure that Gioberti and other nationalists had hoped for. His rapid transformation into the enemy of Italian nationalism, which was a profound blow to liberals in Italy, is extremely hard to explain.

that owing to his epilepsy he 'had a very weak memory and could not concentrate on a subject for any length of time without having to worry about his ideas getting terribly confused'. He was very easily influenced by stronger personalities and was described by the British Ambassador in 1860 as having 'an amiable but weak mind'.

Pius is remembered today for the length of his reign and for his firm stand on Catholic doctrine – and for his amazing transformation on the issue of Italian unification. The man who initially seemed to be a liberal turned out to be a reactionary.

Key date

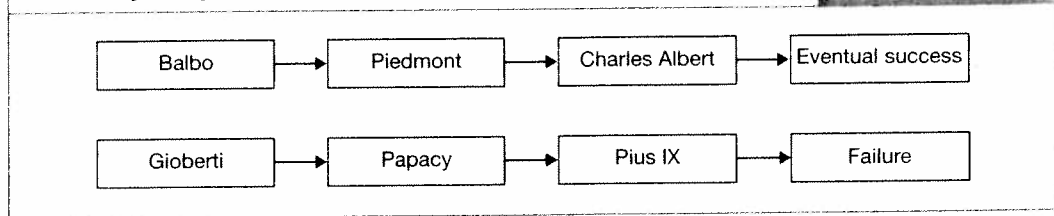
Key figure

9

1

9

Summary diagram: Alternative strategies and leaders



7 | The Revolutions of 1848–9

Origins

The Pope's reforms in 1848 and early 1849 set an example to other states and their rulers. In Piedmont and Tuscany, press censorship was abolished and proposals were made for a joint **customs union** with the Papal States. Even Austrian-controlled Lombardy became restless, worrying Metternich who acted swiftly to preserve Austrian control in northern Italy by making new treaties with Modena and Parma and by strengthening the Austrian **garrison**.

There was a chorus of discontent in Italy that was becoming ever louder. Liberals were calling for constitutions, government reforms and political freedom, while nationalists demanded independence from Austria and some measure of Italian unity.

The situation became more acute owing to economic problems. About 90 per cent of the population of Italy worked on the land and the Italian economy was based almost entirely on agriculture. There was little industry in the north and almost none in the south of the country. When the harvests failed in 1846 and 1847, therefore, problems multiplied not only for the peasants but also for those in the towns. Shortages of wheat and maize meant high prices, wages did not rise to meet the increased costs, and peasants and others could not afford to feed their families. The result was an outbreak of revolutions.

The course of the revolutions

Success in Sicily

Problems became acute first in Sicily, where Ferdinand II, King of Naples, had initially offered a better life for Sicilians by making reforms and appointing a viceroy to see that the reforms were carried out. These did not last and a period of repression coinciding with an outbreak of cholera left Sicilians in a desperate state.

In January 1848 notices were posted up in Palermo, the island's capital:

Sicilians! the time for prayers is past; peaceful protests and demonstrations have all been useless. Ferdinand, King of Naples, has treated them all with contempt and we, as people born free, are loaded with chains and reduced to misery. Shall we still delay

Key question
What combination of factors produced the outbreak of revolutions?

Customs union

An economic agreement whereby two or more states agree to lower or eliminate taxes on the goods they trade with each other.

Garrison

A body of troops stationed to defend a town or locality.

Key terms

Key question
How did events in one area of Italy impact on those in others?

claiming our lawful rights? To arms, sons of Sicily; our united force will be invincible ...

The notice went on to explain that weapons would be handed out to those who came to the main public square at dawn three days later. The authorities could not really believe that a revolution was being announced in advance, but they took no chances and arrested a few likely suspects.

On the day announced, the streets were full of people, but whether they were ordinary sightseers or revolutionaries is impossible to say. After what arms were available had been handed out there were clashes with the government troops. Next day peasants from outside the city arrived to join in the rising. The Neapolitan army retaliated by shelling the city, and they were joined two days later by 5000 reinforcements. They found that the revolutionaries had successfully taken over the city and were demanding a restoration of the famous 1812 constitution that had been abolished by the King of Naples in 1816 (see page 12). A compromise was offered. It was refused.

Fighting continued and by April the revolutionaries had taken over most of the island. A provisional government was set up with the help of middle-class moderates, who were becoming anxious about what the peasants might do next. A civic guard was formed to control 'the masses' who were marching on towns and villages, destroying property, freeing prisoners and burning tax-collection records. A parliament was elected and it declared that Naples and Sicily were finally totally separated and divided, and that the King of Naples was no longer King of Sicily. The Sicilians' aim was as always, in 1848 as in 1820, to free themselves from Naples. They were not concerned with national unity – quite the opposite. Theirs was a separatist movement with the aim of breaking away from Naples and making Sicily independent.

Failure in Naples and Sicily

On the mainland, the revolution spread to Naples within a few days of the uprising in Palermo. A huge demonstration demanded a constitution. The king agreed to a two-chamber parliament with limited powers. He also agreed to form a national guard and to free the press from censorship. Nevertheless, peasant grievances over their right to use common land led to fighting in which Ferdinand's troops were successful.

By September 1848 the government in Naples was able to send troops to retake Sicily. The Sicilians were defeated, after an intense bombardment of local towns which earned Ferdinand the nickname 'King Bomba', and by the spring of 1849 were forced to accept reunification with Naples. There the king had already gone back on his earlier promises, abolished parliament and replaced it with absolute rule and a police state.

Success in central and northern Italy

In the rest of Italy other serious disturbances were occurring in 1848. As a result the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the King of Piedmont promised to grant constitutions. Their example was soon followed by the Pope in the Papal States, but in Modena and Parma the rulers had to leave their states and flee for their lives.

Trouble also started in Milan, in Austrian-controlled Lombardy. It began as a tobacco boycott. Tobacco was an Austrian state monopoly and the people of Milan believed that if they stopped smoking then Austrian finances would be seriously affected. The sight of Austrian soldiers smoking in public was an excuse for attacking them and small-scale fights quickly turned into larger riots and eventually into a full-scale revolution known as 'The Five Days' (17–22 March). The commander-in-chief of the Austrian forces in Italy, the 81-year-old General Radetzky (remembered now for the march tune bearing his name) decided to withdraw from the city, not because he was defeated, but because the situation in Austria had changed dramatically. Revolution had broken out in Vienna and Metternich had resigned.

The fall of Metternich:
13 March 1848

Key date

The provisional government set up in Milan by the revolutionaries prepared to continue the fight against Austria. They decided to ask for help from the neighbouring state of Piedmont, whose king, Charles Albert, had just granted a constitution to his people. A week later, Charles Albert agreed to declare war on Austria and the provisional government in Milan issued an emotional and inaccurate appeal to their fellow citizens:

We have conquered. We have compelled the enemy to fly, oppressed as much by his own shame as our valour; but scattered in our fields, wandering like wild beasts, united in bands of plunderers, he prolonged for us the horrors of war without affording any of its sublime emotions. This makes it easy to understand that the arms we have taken up, and still hold, can never be laid down as long as one of his band shall be hid under cover of the Alps. We have sworn, we swear it again, with the generous Prince who flies to associate himself with our glory – all Italy swears it and so it shall be.

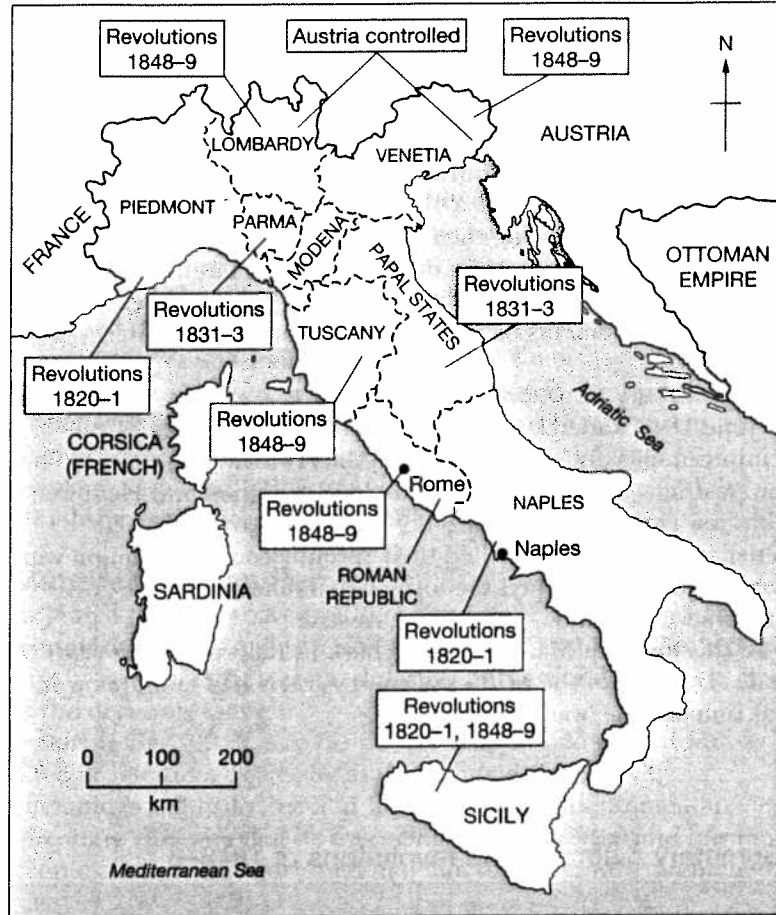
To arms then, to arms, to secure the fruits of our glorious revolution – to fight the last battle of independence and the Italian Union.

In the other Austrian-controlled state, Venetia, a small-scale revolt persuaded the Austrians to surrender, and the Independent Venetian Republic of St Mark was proclaimed in March 1849. Its rapidly elected assembly voted for union with Piedmont.

The impact of the Pope

At first all went well with Charles Albert. His army defeated the Austrians at the end of May 1848, but in the Papal States things were not going so well. The Pope's army commander had disobeyed orders and set off with his troops to join Charles

Revolutions in Italy
1820–49.



Albert's army. This made difficulties for the Pope, who was not at war with Austria. He decided to keep out of the war and, to make his position clear, issued an allocution, an official policy speech made to senior clerics:

Seeing that some at present desire that We too, along with the other Princes of Italy and their subjects, should engage in war against the Austrians, We have thought it suitable to proclaim clearly and openly in this our solemn Assembly, that such a measure is altogether alien from our counsels ... We cannot refrain from dissociating ourselves from the treacherous advice published in journals, and in various works, of those who want the Roman Pontiff [the Pope] to be the head of and to preside over some sort of novel Republic of the whole Italian people. On this occasion we do urgently warn the Italian people to have no part in these proposals, which would be ruinous to Italy, but live in loyalty to their sovereigns whose goodwill they have already experienced, and never to let themselves be torn away ...

Pius IX made it clear not only that he would not join in the war against Austria, but also that he was no longer interested in the

idea of becoming head of an Italian federation of states, or even in the idea of the Church lending support for a united Italy. Two years earlier the Pope had 'blessed "Italy"'. He now withdrew his blessing. The Church had turned its back on liberalism and gone over to the side of reaction and absolutism.

For Charles Albert and other loyal Catholics the loss of papal support for their cause was a bitter blow. They would have to choose between following their political principles and obeying their spiritual leader. It was a difficult decision but many decided in favour of their political principles. As a result the liberal and nationalist movements became noticeably **anticlerical**.

Revolutionary setbacks

In June 1848 Radetzky arrived back from Austria with reinforcements and in July Charles Albert's army was defeated by the Austrians at Custoza. An **armistice** was signed and Piedmont withdrew from Lombardy, leaving it in Austrian hands. The Venetians hurriedly cancelled their recently completed union with Piedmont, re-established the former Republic of St Mark and prepared to continue the war with Austria.

At this moment Mazzini arrived back in Italy after long years of exile. The 'war of the princes' against Austria had failed; now it was time for the 'war of the people'.

Anticlerical
Unsympathetic or hostile to the Church and its clergy.

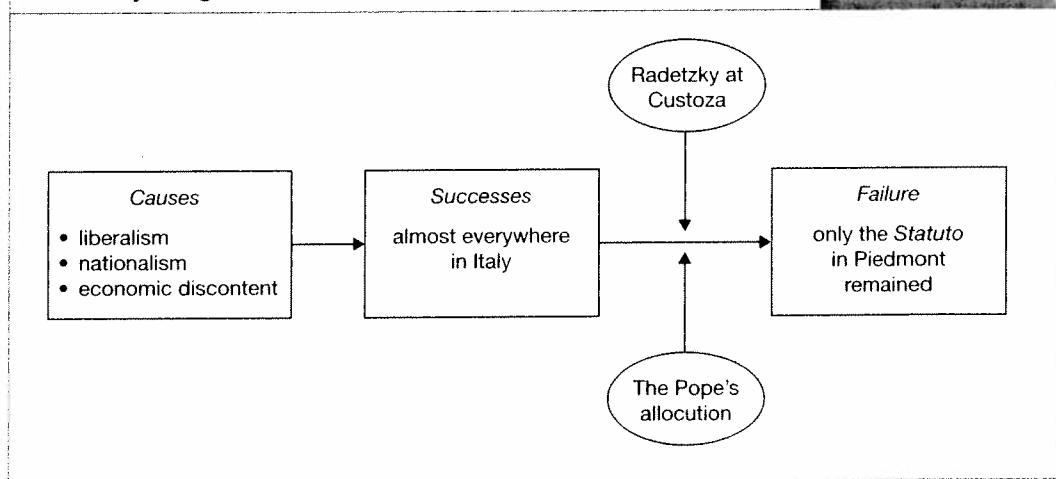
Armistice
A truce, or ceasefire.

Key terms

Charles Albert defeated by Austria at the battle of Custoza: 24 July 1848

Key date

Summary diagram: The revolutions of 1848–9



Key question
What did the Roman Republic achieve?

Key date
The founding of the Roman Republic:
February 1849

Key terms
Constituente
A meeting in Rome of representatives from all over Italy.

Triumvirate
A governing group of three men.

8 | The Roman Republic and the Revolutions of 1848–9

The Pope flees

In Rome the Pope's unpopular chief minister, Count Pellegrino Rossi, was murdered at the end of November 1848. Rioting followed and the Pope fled from a city in turmoil to take refuge in Naples, while the government that he had left behind announced a series of reforms. It abolished the unpopular tax on grinding corn, provided public building work for the unemployed and proposed the holding of a *Constituente*. The election of these representatives was organised by a special Council of State whose members were chosen by the government of Rome, and the *Constituente* met for the first time in February 1849. Among its members was Garibaldi. Four days later the *Constituente* proclaimed an end to the temporal power of the Pope and the establishment of the Roman Republic.

Mazzini's Roman Republic

In March Mazzini arrived in Rome and was elected as head of a **triumvirate** (see the illustration on page 38) that would rule the city. In fact, though, Mazzini did most of the work and made most of the decisions himself.

During the 100 days of his power, Mazzini had to deal with a difficult situation, especially as the rich had fled the city, unemployment had risen and his enemies outside Rome were spreading rumours that he was being wantonly cruel and burning people alive. But he governed in a fair, tolerant and enlightened way:

- he abolished the death penalty and the Inquisition
- taxation was reformed to aid the poor
- the clerical monopoly on education was ended
- a dozen new newspapers started up
- he declared Catholicism to be the official religion of the new republic, as a majority of its inhabitants wanted
- he also urged that Rome, Piedmont, Florence and Venice should work together to end Austrian rule in Italy.

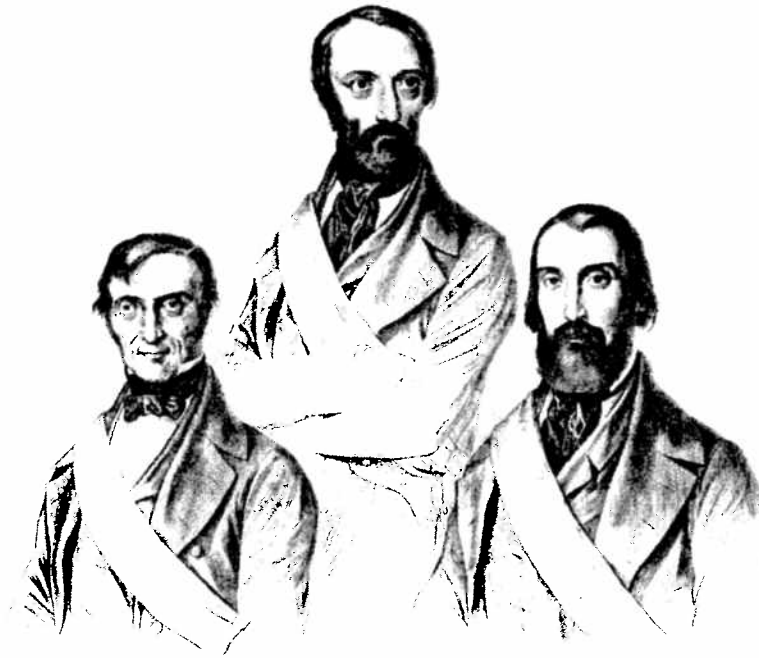
Mazzini was described by an American observer in Rome as 'a man of genius, an elevated thinker ... the only great Italian ... in action as decisive and full of resource as Caesar'.

The republic did not last long enough for the real effects of his actions to become clear, but many Romans took inspiration from these months and remembered them for a long time to come.

The fall of the republic

The Pope appealed to France, Spain and Naples to help free Rome 'from the enemies of our most holy religion and civil society', and an army of about 20,000 men was sent from France to destroy the Roman Republic. This they did, for although the gallant defence of the city by Garibaldi became one of the legends of the *Risorgimento*, the odds against him were too great

Key date
The ending of the Roman Republic:
June 1849



Lithograph of Mazzini with the other two triumvirs of the Roman Republic, Carlo Armellini and Aurelio Saffi. Mazzini did indeed stand head and shoulders above members of the triumvirate.

and the city fell to the French at the end of June 1849. A French garrison with the duty of safeguarding the Pope remained in Rome until 1870.

Mazzini explained why the Roman Republic fought so fiercely:

To the many other causes which decided us to resist, there was one closely bound up with the aim of my whole life – the foundation of a national unity. Rome was the natural centre of that unity and it was important to attract the eyes and reverence of my countrymen towards her ... It was essential to redeem Rome; to place her once again at the summit so that Italians might again learn to regard her as the temple of their common country ...

After the fall of the city he appealed to citizens:

Romans, your city has been overcome by brute force, but your rights are neither lessened nor changed. By all you hold sacred, citizens, keep yourselves uncontaminated. Organise peaceful demonstrations ... In the streets, in the theatres, in every place of meeting let the same cries be heard. Thousands cannot be imprisoned. Men cannot be compelled to degrade themselves.

Revolutionary defeats

The Pope returned to Rome in the afternoon of 12 April 1850 and was cheered through the streets by the same citizens who had cheered for Mazzini, Garibaldi and the Roman Republic a year earlier, evidence perhaps that even the return of the Pope was preferable to the hardships they had endured over the past months under French military occupation. Yet with the Pope also

Key question
Why did revolutions continue to fail in 1848–9?

came the return of the repressive apparatus of papal rule: the Inquisition, corruption, public floggings and the guillotine.

Failure elsewhere

The Venetian Republic

The Roman Republic was not alone. There was another, the Venetian Republic, that had held out courageously against a siege by the Austrian navy in the course of which the city was heavily shelled in the early summer of 1849. A severe outbreak of cholera added to the misery of starving Venetians, who were driven by their hunger and disease to surrender to the Austrians in August 1849.

Piedmont

Earlier in the year Charles Albert, having apparently recovered from the horrors of his defeat at Custoza and his distress at abandoning Lombardy to the Austrians, decided in March to re-enter the war. (See pages 51–5 for more details of Charles Albert's rule in Piedmont.) Exactly why he made this decision is not clear. Some historians believe that he wanted revenge for his earlier defeat, others think that it was because he had had time to regroup his forces and was ready for action. He may also have believed, wrongly, that France would come to his aid if he re-entered the war.

Charles Albert was not to get his revenge. Within a month he was heavily defeated at the battle of Novara. This was the last straw. A broken man, he abdicated in favour of his son, Victor Emmanuel II.

Tuscany

In neighbouring Tuscany the Grand Duke had granted a constitution at the beginning of 1848. When news of the revolution in Vienna and the dismissal of Metternich reached Tuscany, the government decided to send a small army to fight the Austrians. Workers in the cities began to agitate about pay and conditions and middle-class radical extremists began to preach republicanism. In January 1849 the Grand Duke could stand it no longer and left for Naples, which still possessed an absolute monarchy. In Tuscany a revolutionary provisional government was set up and a **dictator** was appointed in advance of arrangements being made to proclaim a republic. Before this could be done, however, Charles Albert had been defeated at Novara. This left the Austrian army free to sweep down into Tuscany where they crushed the revolution and restored the Grand Duke to his throne.

Much the same happened in Modena and Parma, where the rulers who fled to escape the revolutions were also restored to their thrones by Austrian military might.

Key date

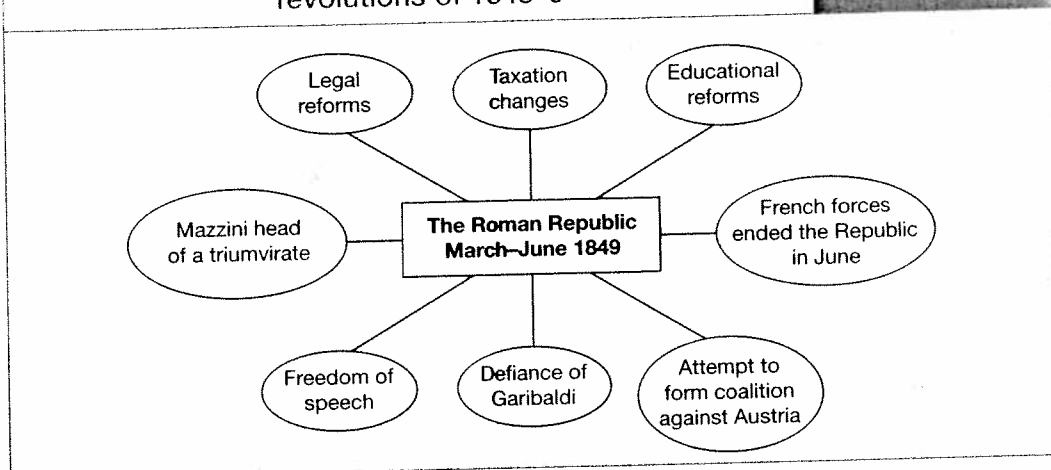
Charles Albert
defeated at the battle
of Novara: 23 March
1849

Key term

Dictator

Originally a term used in Ancient Rome to denote a chief magistrate with absolute power; appointed in an emergency.

Summary diagram: The Roman Republic and the revolutions of 1848–9



9 | Conclusion

By the middle of 1849 it was clear that the revolutions had failed, just as they had in 1820 and 1831:

- In Sicily, Neapolitan rule had been re-established and the Two Sicilies had been forcibly reunited under an even more absolute and repressive government than before.
- In the Papal States the Roman Republic had been destroyed and the Pope restored to his temporal power by the French soldiers who continued to occupy Rome. All expectations that Pius IX would be a liberal supporter of national unity for Italy were shattered.
- Tuscany, Modena and Parma found themselves again under absolute rule.
- The Venetian Republic came under tighter Austrian control, as did Lombardy.
- Worst of all, the strongest state, Piedmont, had suffered humiliating defeat by the Austrians in two battles.
- The only success for the revolutionaries was that the constitution, the *Statuto*, granted to Piedmont by Charles Albert, survived and would continue to do so, eventually becoming the basis of the constitution of the new united Kingdom of Italy in 1860. But none of the other constitutions wrung from their rulers by the revolutionaries survived.
- None of the rulers forced to escape from their states was away for long.
- None of the states that gained independence – Sicily, Lombardy and Venetia – was able to retain it.

The revolutions had been an almost total failure, and a failure which had involved suffering and death for a very large number of people. As in the earlier revolutions 'Italy' suffered from major drawbacks: a lack of unity, a lack of popular support and a lack of international allies.

Key question
What were the key factors in the failure of Italian nationalism?

Lack of unity

There was a lack of co-operation between the revolutionary groups. Those in Sicily and Naples were particularly at loggerheads. In Piedmont, Charles Albert would not accept volunteers from other states in his army, or work with any other revolutionary groups, unless they first declared their loyalty to the Piedmontese royal family.

The revolutionaries themselves were divided in their aims. Liberals believed that the granting of a constitution by the ruler was the necessary first step everywhere, but the radicals favoured republics. Both groups wanted to expel the foreign occupying power, Austria, but they could agree on little else.

There was no universally acceptable national leader who could co-ordinate policy. Of the three possible candidates, Mazzini, Pope Pius IX and Charles Albert, none was acceptable to everyone. Local revolutionary leaders had no central guidance and the provisional governments that they set up could be any of the following: moderate, extremist, liberal, radical, republican, democratic or monarchist.

Lack of popular support

In the end it was not just that provisional governments and revolutionary movements lacked guidance in 1848–9. They were inexperienced, weak and lacking in resources, particularly military ones. They could not maintain themselves in power having gained it, partly owing to lack of support from the mass of the population, except perhaps while fighting was actually going on. The liberals did not in any case wish to encourage popular support or to involve the peasants. Politics, for them, was a middle-class affair. With few exceptions, peasants found themselves no better off under a liberal-dominated revolutionary government than they had been before. Social reform was not important to liberals and life did not improve for ordinary people.

Lack of international allies

The other vital explanation of revolutionary failure was the military power of Italy's enemies. Austria's military supremacy was probably the single most important factor in the failure of the revolutions. The Austrian armies were superior in numbers, better equipped and much better led than any other army in the peninsula. In any conflict they were bound to win, even if the revolutionary forces had been able to present a united front – which they did not. It was the Austrians who took the leading role in restoring the old regimes in 1849.

In 1848–9 Italian revolutionaries clearly needed allies to counter-balance the might of Austria. But the Pope's influence on the Catholic powers of Europe was clearly **counter-revolutionary**. France, Austria's traditional enemy, might have seemed at one stage a possible ally, but in fact France's only military action – crushing the Roman Republic – was ranged against Italian nationalists. In such a situation, there seemed very little cause for optimism in the nationalist camps.

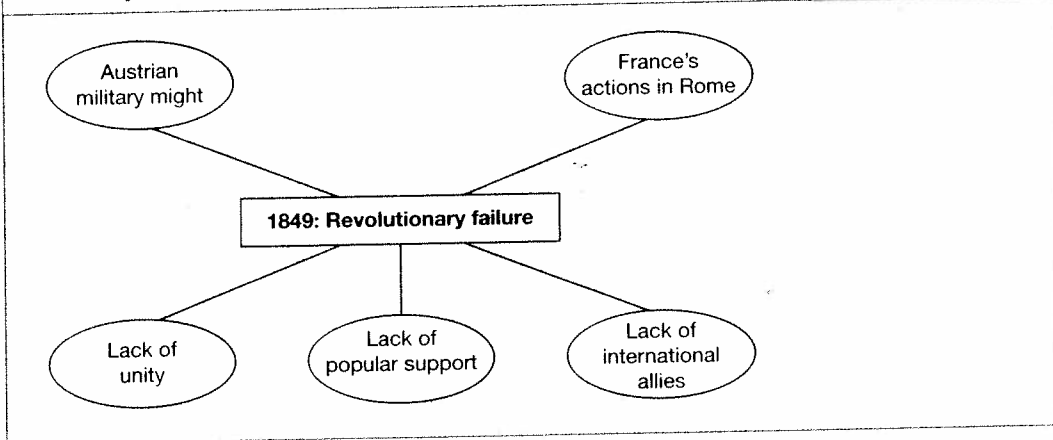
Key term

Counter-revolutionary
Bringing about a revolution that is opposed to or reverses a former revolution.

A new dawn?

The Italian situation was unexpectedly about to change in the 1850s. In Piedmont the *Statuto* remained in force and gave opportunities for political life to continue in ways that were not possible elsewhere in Italy. Refugees from other states came to Piedmont and settled there, more than 200,000 in Turin and Genoa. They gave Piedmont a cosmopolitan air and a more nationalist flavour which paved the way for what was to come in the person of Count Camillo Benso di Cavour. He was to be one of the great figures in the history of the unification of Italy. But for Italian nationalism to succeed there also had to be changes in European politics, and in particular the emergence of a powerful ally.

Summary diagram: Conclusion



Study Guide: AS Questions

In the style of AQA

- (a) Explain why revolution broke out in Rome in 1848. (12 marks)
- (b) 'The revolutions of 1848–9 in Italy failed through lack of unity.' Explain why you agree or disagree with this view. (24 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the questions.

- (a) You should try to provide a variety of reasons to explain the outbreak of the revolution in Rome. Think in terms of both long- and short-term factors. Long-term factors might include: the legacy of the events of the 1820s (page 24); the impact of the ideas of Mazzini (pages 25–9) and Pope Pius IX (pages 30–2); the Pope's reforms of 1848–9; and the activities within the other Italian states at the time.

Short-term factors might include: changes in the Pope's attitude (pages 35–6); the murder of Count Rossi and the Pope's departure (page 37); and the part played by Garibaldi (page 28) and Mazzini.

Try to prioritise and show links between the reasons you have selected. You should provide an overall conclusion and convey some judgement. You might consider whether the influence of the papacy helped or hindered the outbreak of revolution and whether this was a 'copy-cat' revolution or one specific to the Papal States.

- (b) This question is asking you to consider different views of why the revolutions of 1848–9 failed. Obviously you will need to focus on the lack of unity, but a well-balanced answer will also require a consideration of other factors. You should try to decide which factor(s) you consider most important and argue accordingly. Your essay should lead to a well-substantiated conclusion.

Re-read page 41. You may be able to add additional categories to those given there. Perhaps your list might include:

- lack of popular support
- lack of international allies
- lack of effective leaders
- lack of military strength
- the power of 'conservative forces' including Austria.

In the style of Edexcel

To what extent did the revolutions of 1848–9 fail in Italy due to poor leadership? (30 marks)

Exam tips

The cross-references are intended to take you straight to the material that will help you to answer the question.

Questions that ask 'to what extent' require you to weigh up one specified cause with others that are not named but with which you should be familiar. Therefore it is worth jotting down on some spare paper a list of the various reasons why the revolutions failed in Italy. These might include:

- Poor leadership. But poor in what sense? Half-hearted, incompetent, or simply divided (see pages 29 and 41)?
- Lack of mass support (see pages 38 and 41).
- The power of Austria and of other states (see pages 37 and 41).
- The attitude of the papacy (see pages 31 and 36).

Each of these might form a paragraph or group of paragraphs. But in which order would you include them? It is best to focus on poor leadership first. After all, this is the issue specified in the question, so it is the one on which you should write most, and if you leave it to the end you might run out of time. Also, only if this issue does not

provide a full explanation for the failure of the revolutions are you justified in looking at other possible causes.

The other complicating factor for this essay is that there were, of course, several revolutions in Italy in 1848–9. Did the causes of defeat vary from place to place? If you think they varied significantly, you could divide your answer geographically, looking at the reasons for failure region by region. But even if you arrange the essay in accordance with the different factors you must include examples from the different states.

Do not forget a short conclusion at the end, where you hammer home your viewpoint. Just how important was poor leadership compared with the other factors you've identified and written about?

In the style of OCR

Study the four sources and then answer **both** sub-questions. It is recommended that you spend two-thirds of your time in answering part (b).

(a) Study Sources A and C.

Compare these sources as evidence for the motives and achievements of King Charles Albert. (30 marks)

(b) Study all the sources.

Use your own knowledge to assess how far the sources support the interpretation that the movement for Italian unification was doomed to fail in 1848. (70 marks)

Source A

From: a call to arms by the King of Piedmont issued the day after the Austrians had been expelled from Milan. Charles Albert's Proclamation, 23 March 1848.

Peoples of Lombardy and Venetia, our arms are now coming to offer you in the latter phases of your fight the help which a brother expects from a brother, and a friend from a friend.

We will support your just desires, confident as we are in the help of that God whose helpful hand has wonderfully enabled Italy to rely on her own strength [*Italia fara da sè*].

To show our feelings of Italian brotherhood, we have ordered our troops as they move into Lombardy and Venice to carry the Cross of Savoy, symbol of our royal house, imposed on the tricolour flag of Italy.

Source B

On 29 April 1848 the Pope issued the allocution withdrawing from the war against Austria and condemning popular risings against legitimate rulers. A cartoon from the British magazine *Punch* published in May 1848.



Papal Allocution.—Snuffing out Modern Civilisation.

Source C

From: Carol Pisacane, an early Italian socialist and professional soldier who fought with Italian forces against the Austrians in 1848. He gives an account of war in Lombardy and Venetia in *The War in Italy 1848–49*, published in 1850.

Spurred on by the Lombard aristocracy, Charles Albert declared war on Austria while assuring other countries that he was marching to suppress republicanism. Other Italian rulers, under popular pressure, let themselves be drawn into the war. The king's plan at first seemed about to succeed. Not only Lombardy but even Venetia placed themselves in his hands. Then the outlook changed. When the other Italian rulers saw that the war was just designed to increase the power of Charles Albert, who

might threaten their existence, they began deserting the cause. The Piedmontese army was demoralised by inaction and the Austrian forces emerged from Verona. Charles Albert attacked and was defeated.

Source D

From: John Gooch, The Unification of Italy published in 1986. A modern historian explains some of the reasons for the failure of moves to achieve Italian unification in 1848.

The failure of 1848 helped to clarify certain facts. Rebellion would not work. Any attempt at progress required united effort if it was to stand a chance of success. Such an effort would fail without a committed leadership which all could accept. Any common political programme must not antagonise those prepared to fight for independence; middle-class nationalists did not want socialism at any price. Also, foreign support was vital if Austrian rule was to end. The diversity of ideas and aims had divided patriots.

Source: adapted from OCR, June 2001

Exam tips

General Introduction: You have 90 minutes to answer both questions, so split your time in proportion to the marks on offer: one-third for **(a)**, two-thirds for **(b)**. You have plenty of time, so read the sources through several times, slowly and carefully. Have several coloured highlighters with you so that you can colour-code sections in each that:

- support or challenge each other as evidence on various points to do with the issue set in question **(a)**
- confirm/disconfirm the interpretation that you have to consider for question **(b)**.

(a) Never paraphrase the two sources. That is not a comparison. Don't discuss each source in order, one at a time. That technique is poor because you will not be giving a good, clear comparison. Instead, pick out individual themes and points and compare what each source says on each one. This approach makes for a genuine comparison and will push up your marks.

These two sources offer very different views of the king's motives and achievements. Both agree that Charles Albert marched to expel Austria from Italy. Against the king's bold claims about liberty in Source A, however, Pisacane in Source C condemns Charles Albert's motives as selfish and his achievements as ineffective. On motives, for example, Pisacane in Source C, argues that the king was concerned primarily with Piedmontese aggrandisement. Source A might support that charge because the king openly admits to using the Cross of Savoy, the badge of Piedmont. Alternatively, the king could be taken at face value by noting that Charles Albert says he has combined the Cross with the Italian tricolour to stress that Piedmont is acting in the name of the Italian brotherhood.

How might such contradictions be explained? If you consider the nature of the two sources, you can compare the view taken by each source on Charles Albert's achievements: an official proclamation (Source A) seeking support across Italy for Charles Albert's actions (Source A) as against the hostile political position of Pisacane (you are told about this directly in the introduction to Source C). The dates help you too: Source A was written in 1848 in an atmosphere of hope as the war was about to start, whereas Pisacane (Source C) wrote after everything had gone wrong and he was looking for the reasons why the revolutions of 1848–9 had failed. Pisacane was bitter.

Always consider the context and provenance of the actual sources you have to use; that information tells you so much and will really push you up the mark bands.

- (b)** As in **(a)**, don't view the sources one at a time, trawling through each one in turn listing what it says about why the cause of unification failed. Instead, look at them thematically as a set. Thus Sources A and C consider Piedmont's self-interest; Sources B, C and D look at issues of leadership; Sources C and D consider both Italian disunity and Austrian power, and Sources C and D also examine political objectives. If you construct your answer in this way, you will give a real and a full comparison (as required).

Note carefully the instructions in the second sub-question. Each of these areas needs to be judged not against the sources directly, but in the light of the degree to which what you know supports or undermines what the sources say. The question asks you to 'Use your own knowledge to assess how far the sources support the interpretation that ...'.

Note the word 'doomed' near the end of the question. For high marks you will need to consider that: not just failure, but doomed to failure. They are not the same thing. Source C says nothing about inevitable failure, whereas Source D implies the revolutions were bound to fail.

Finally, note the date: 1848. The sources talk only of 1848, but you know that that was not the end. Hostilities continued (e.g. the renewal of hostilities by Piedmont in 1849, the continued resistance of the Venetian Republic). Your own knowledge is the means by which the question tells you to judge what the sources say about the cause being doomed to fail in 1848. You know otherwise, so say so (but don't be tempted to go on to talk of eventual unification in 1859–70).